SIDELIGHTS ON THE WORLD'S NEWS

PRESIDENT GOING TO SEE FOR HIMSELF
HOW THE PANAMA CANAL DIRT IS FLYING

1.—Distilled Water For the Children of Panama. 2, 5, 6 and 7.—President Taft's Previous Visit to the Canal Zone. 3.—Spreader at Work. 4.—In One of the Big Cuts. 8.—Native Family of Panama.

By CHARLES N. LURIE.

Every American who can do so should visit the isthmus of Panama and see for himself what is being done there. He will return home prouder of his country, which undertook this vast work, and of its army officers and civilians whose ability and devotion to duty are carrying the canal on to early completion.—Colonel Frank J. Hecker, Former Member of the Panama Canal Commission.

SEEING for himself what is being done at Panama is the object of President Taft's visit to the isthmus, planned to take place almost immediately after the election. It is no sightseeing inquisitiveness which takes Mr. Taft to Panama, since he inspected the canal work early in 1909, when he was president elect. Neither is it a desire for a holiday jaunt, since he finished only recently his long vacation sojourn at Beverly. His motive in going to the canal zone is an earnest desire to witness for himself the progress of the great work and to consult on the ground with the men charged with its execution and the solution of the numerous problems which will attend its completion.

For the comfort of the president's tour the armored cruisers Montana and North Carolina, two of the newest of the navy's vessels, were chosen to convey him to the isthmus—one to carry the august person of the ex officio commander in chief of the navy and head of the canal work and the other to act as a convoy and assure his safety.

Roosevelt's Visit to Panama.

The present excursion is not the first presidential trip to the canal zone. Mr. Roosevelt traversed the canal route from end to end in 1906, riding on the locomotives of the railroad, clambering on the steam shovels and in other characteristic ways evincing his keen interest in the work. It is not expected that Mr. Taft will exhibit quite as many acrobatic stunts as did his predecessor, but no doubt he will pry quite as thoroughly into every detail of the job that is being done on the isthmus.

Not alone on the isthmus, but also on the way there, Mr. Taft's itinerary is filled with work. He has planned to write on the way down to the isthmus his annual message to congress. Being an unusually good sailor and also accustomed to working on board ship, he expects to find little difficulty in getting together his admonitions to the legislators and his announcements to the nation. From Charleston to Colon is not a long distance, however, being only four days' sail, and it is not expected that the message will emerge full formed from the voyage. No doubt canal matters will claim a large part of the message.

After President Taft lands at Colon, on the Atlantic side of the canal, his time will be fully occupied with consideration of the details of the canal work. To mention only three of the very important matters which will claim his attention, there are the questions of the fixing of the toll rates to be charged by the canal, of the fortification of the isthmus and of the control by the government of the sale of ships' supplies at the entrances to the canal. It is feared that private commercial enterprises may, by acquiring terminal facilities at the ends of the completed waterway, gain control over the ships' supplies needed to replenish stores after long voyages to one or the other of the mouths of the canal. The consideration of this important matter is one of the prime reasons for Mr. Taft's visit to the canal zone.

Time For Canal's Opening.

It will be noted that the matters named are closely related to the question of the approaching completion of the great work of making islands of North and South America. In the opinion of the engineering experts the time is approaching rapidly for the realization of the centuries old dream of the union of the two great oceans. Jan. 1, 1915, has been fixed upon by the canal commission for the probable date of throwing open of the canal to the maritime traffic of the world. It has been asserted with confidence that the date may be anticipated. The completion of the great work should not be looked for before the close of 1914, however, since there is good authority for the assertion that the government will "make haste slowly" if it is seen that the canal can be finished before the date given. Reason for procrastination is to be found in the time needed to erect the works of fortification deemed necessary to defend American interests in the canal.

There is already an appreciable sentiment in favor of vesting the government of the canal zone when the canal is completed in the army authorities. This would make the entire zone a military district or division. It is believed that President Taft will ask congress this winter for appropriations to construct the required fortifications.

The navy and the army are co-operating in planning the defense of the canal. One of the objects of the trip to the Pacific and gulf coasts recently undertaken by Secretary of the Navy Meyer was the determination of the question as to the redistribution of the forces to be made necessary by the opening of the canal. It is believed that it will be necessary to enlarge greatly the navy yards at San Francisco and Pensacola and also possibly that at New Orleans. The gulf coast is looking forward to renewed naval activity in that section of the nation as a result of the canal's opening. Guantanamo, Cuba, is another point of importance in this connection. The naval station there may be developed into a big naval base.

Before the adjournment of congress plans were prepared by the army experts for the fortifications of the two ends of the canal. President Taft sent a special message to congress urging that the work be pushed, but no formal action of approval was taken by the lawmakers. The Pacific end of the canal will be protected by fortifications placed on three small islands commanding the mouth of the waterway, and also by a battery on the mainland. The Atlantic end will be guarded by two fortifications on the mainland, one on each side of the entrance. These fortifications will be provided with fourteen inch disappearing rifles, with high power mortars and with batteries of six inch disappearing guns.

Taft's Opinion of the Canal.

The pictures show the details of the reception given to President Taft during his first visit to the canal zone. On his return he landed in New Orleans and said to the people of that city:

"I am here on my return from a great constructive work, the greatest entered upon by any nation during the past two centuries, and I am glad to say to you, who perhaps are more interested in that work than any other part of the people of the United States, that the work is going on as you would have it go on; that on the 1st of January, 1915, at least, if not before—and I am very much interested in having it within the next four years—that canal will be completed."

It is asserted by those directly and intimately concerned in the canal work that nothing has occurred since Feb. 12, 1909, when these words were spoken, to thwart the president's expectations.

PARLIAMENT SOON TO WRESTLE WITH MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

SEVEN days after the election of our own house of representatives comes the assembling of the British parliament. The session will be one of great importance—so great, in fact, that radical changes in the constitution of the British empire are predicted as the outcome of its deliberations. The number of questions which will engage the attention of the lords and commons is not large, but in their importance and their bearing on the future of the world's greatest empire they are worthy of the serious consideration of every student of "world politics."

Home rule for Ireland and other parts of the empire, an imperial parliament in which the colonies are to be represented, tariff reform, reformation of the house of lords or its abolishment as a lawmaking body, the question of pay for members of the house of parliament, heretofore unpaid, save in a few instances by their constituents—these are some of the matters which will occupy the minds of British lawmakers and statesmen within the coming months—that is, they will unless the predicted dissolution and general election put another face upon British politics.

Foremost in popular interest to the Britons is the question of the payment of legislators for their services. Unlike our own senators and representatives, the members of the two houses receive no pay for their services to the nation. It is considered that the term "member of parliament" confers distinction on its possessor and that the privilege of sharing in the nation's lawmaking is one to be sought for itself alone and not for any pecuniary reward. In practice this has been found to bar out able men without private means, and some political bodies, especially the labor unions, have made grants to their representatives to enable them to stand for parliament and share in the work at St. Stephen's. But the courts have now held in the famous Osborne case that the Labor party may not levy funds for political purposes from trade unions. As a result of this decision the question of the payment of members of the house of commons is receiving renewed agitation. Arguments in opposition, on the ground that there is danger of corruption of parliamentary character, are met by the assertion that in the seventeenth century, when the house reached perhaps the zenith of its power and independence, the members were salaried.

Another moot question of immense importance not only to Great Britain, but to the world, is that of tariff reform. In Great Britain the term means the abandonment of the policy of free trade which has prevailed for many years and the imposition of duties on imports. Preferential duties in favor of exports from British colonies are urged. The whole matter is one in which the whole world is deeply concerned, since the commerce of Great Britain and its dependencies forms so large a part of the world's trade.

PREMIER ASQUITH. JOHN REDMOND. DAVID LLOYD-GEORGE.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

Correspondence with the American political situation is found in Great Britain in the "insurgency" of some members of the Unionist, or Tory, party, now in opposition. The leader of the party is Arthur J. Balfour, who was prime minister before the Unionists lost power. About 100 members of the party are dissatisfied with Mr. Balfour's leadership and have threatened revolt. In a recent address he failed to meet their expectations. They wanted him to promise unequivocally to repeal the new land taxes when they regained power and to come out openly in favor of tariff reform, and they have declared plainly their dissent from his leadership. But the party is badly split on these questions and others, and there is no Moses in sight to lead them to the promised land. Joseph Chamberlain, the old warhorse, is expected to return to the house; but, according to his son, he will take no active part in its deliberations. His health is still precarious. Chamberlain is now an old man, and the fire and spirit which made him the most feared politician in British public life have seemingly departed forever.

The matter of home rule for Ireland is perennial. John Redmond's recent declaration that it will be an accomplished fact in two months after the opening of the session or within two years at the utmost has attracted attention, of course, but he has found few to agree with him, especially as the question is now complicated with that of home rule for the colonies. His adoption in New York of the policy of home rule all around has not met with the approval of his opponents in Ireland, who declare that it is a surrender of the Irish cause. However, Redmond remains the leader in parliament of the Irish, who, it is said, may swing legislation as they wish if they will act in conjunction with the labor members. His leadership meets with vigorous opposition from William O'Brien and other Irish politicians.

Lloyd-George and the budget, which was adopted after it had caused a breach between the lords and the commons, are still matters of interest, and the brilliant Welsh chancellor of the exchequer continues to make a large figure in the public eye. He is easily the most conspicuous of British statesmen of the present day, overshadowing Premier Asquith. Lloyd-George is a prime favorite with the new king, who has given him many distinctions.

The modification of the king's accession oath eliminating that part in which he denounced the Roman Catholic and other dissenting churches has met with the general approval of the Catholics and the nonconformists and has been disapproved by only a small part of the population.

WILLIAM HENDERSON.

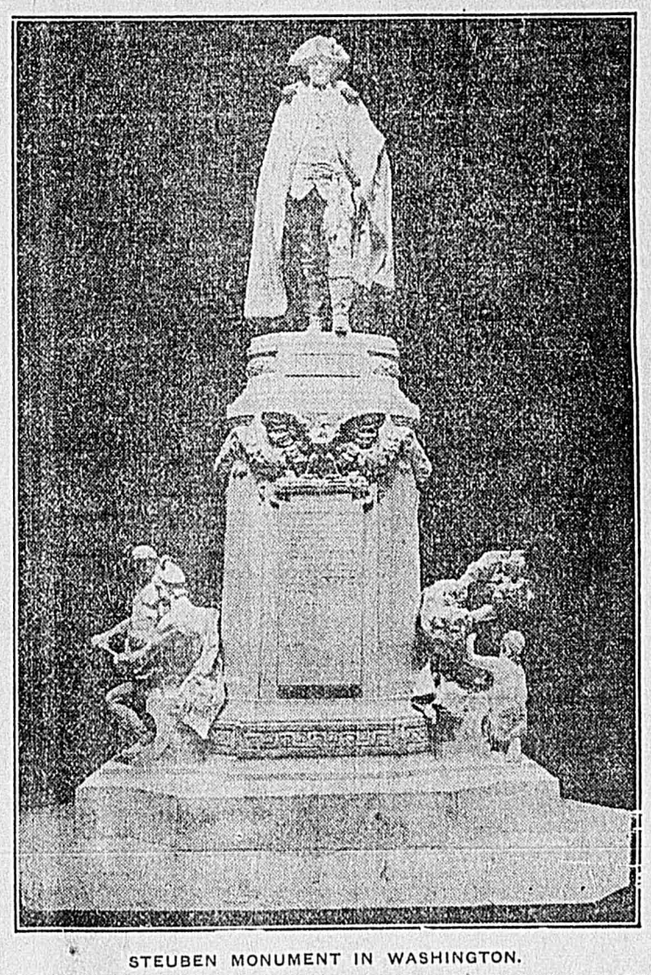
AFTER MANY YEARS' NEGLECT AMERICA IS TO HONOR GENERAL VON STEUBEN

HISTORY can cite few examples of greater devotion to an adopted country than that of General von Steuben, whose services are to receive recognition in Washington next month. And when the chronicler seeks leading cases to fortify the theory that "republics are ungrateful" he has only to turn to the page on which Steuben's story is inscribed. Now, after more than a century of neglect, this republic is to prove itself not ungrateful. The name and fame of Steuben are written forth boldly on a national memorial placed near the White House that all visitors to the national capital may learn of the deeds of the man who made Washington's army an effective fighting machine and thus prepared the way for the final victory at Yorktown.

From all over the land our fellow citizens of German descent are to assemble in Washington to hear extolled the deeds of Steuben. They will listen to a dedicatory address by President Taft in which no doubt he will enumerate the worthy deeds of German Americans proved true in the fires of American life, not only on the battlefield, but in the contests of civic endeavor. Probably the most stirring periods of the president's address will be reserved for the time when he will tell of the earnest devotion with which General Steuben, "the drillmaster of the Revolution," strove to bring order out of the chaos of Washington's little army and fit its patriots to meet successfully the better armed, better equipped, better drilled but not better led soldiers of King George. The president will not need the coloring of rhetoric to enable him to do justice to his subject. A simple recital of the facts would suffice.

To the average American the name and fame of Steuben are but a dim memory of school learned lessons. With the career of Lafayette we are more familiar, and his name is perpetuated in countless ways in the United States, which he served in the nation's infancy. Without detracting from the deserved renown of the heroic, gallant Frenchman it may be said with justice that his services to the young nation, great as they were, weighed little in the balance of effectiveness as compared with those of Steuben. Lafayette was a romantic volunteer who made America's cause his own, won the heart of Washington and did excellent service in the fighting. Steuben, on the other hand, made himself indispensable to the American cause.

The arrival of Steuben at Valley Forge introduced order in place of disorganization, and, while it did not render less difficult the question of procuring supplies, it did aid very greatly in the proper utilization of those supplies after they were obtained. For this work Steuben received full recognition from Washington and his associates. It remained for a later generation to neglect the generous German's just claim for recompense.



STEUBEN MONUMENT IN WASHINGTON.

Of Steuben's services Bancroft, the historian, writes:

"The memory of Steuben has many claims upon the present generation. To the cause of our country in the times of its distress he, at the sacrifice of a secure career, devoted the experience and skill which had been fruit of long years of service under the greatest master of the art of war of that day. He rendered the inestimable benefit of introducing a better rule into the discipline of the American army and stricter accountability in the distribution of military stores. He served under our flag with implicit fidelity, with indefatigable industry and courage that shrank from no danger. His presence was important, both in the camp and on the field of battle, from the huts of Valley Forge to Yorktown, and he remained with us until his death."

The "greatest master in the art of war" referred to was Frederick the Great, from whom Steuben had received instruction.